

# ADR England Public Insights Panel: Meeting 3 Summary Report

25 September 2024

The ADR England Public Insights Panel held its third meeting on 25 September 2024, 18:30-20:00, on Zoom.

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## 1. Attendance

**Facilitators:** Dan Clay and Deepa Ramanathan (Basis Social)

**Public attendees:** 7 out of 15 board members were present. The remaining board members (public attendees) were unable to attend.

**Presenters:** Shayda Kashef (Senior Public Engagement Manager, ADR UK), Pia Hardelid (Research Associate, UCL), and Bryce Millard (Data Scientist, Ministry of Justice)

## 2. Presentation on the Kids' Environment and Health Cohort

Dan Clay introduced the topic for the first part of the workshop by asking the board members to share what comes to mind when they think about the relationship between the environment and children's health.

The board members identified air pollution, access to green spaces, and urban density as key factors affecting children's health. They raised concerns about schools near busy roads, especially in densely populated cities like London, where pollution levels are higher. Limited green space was also noted as restricting outdoor play, potentially hindering children's development.

Pia Hardelid then presented the Kids' Environment and Health Cohort project, funded by ADR UK. She explained that the research aims to create a comprehensive database linking various data sets to study the environmental impacts on children's health over

time. Pia also highlighted how data utilised is anonymised and securely managed by NHS England, the Office for National Statistics, and the Department for Education.

The board was prompted to share their views and questions on the project. Their questions related to:

- How long a child's health data would be stored for (up to 18 years or for their lifetime)
- How high-risk groups would be defined
- How the data would be used to study the relationship between children's health and their environment (correlation vs causation)

Pia's answers to the above questions were as follows:

- The storage duration of children's health data is still under discussion. Researchers would ideally extend it beyond age 18, as many young adults with long-term conditions transition to adult services later, making extended data valuable for research.
- High-risk groups for the children's environment and health project include those with chronic conditions like asthma or premature birth. These children are more vulnerable to environmental factors, which can worsen their health.
- Researchers will first identify correlations between environmental factors (e.g., green spaces, air pollution) and health outcomes (e.g., mental health, respiratory issues). They will then explore causation by analysing pre- and post-policy changes affecting environmental conditions near children's schools and homes.

One of the board members was surprised that such a study had not yet been conducted in England, especially since it had already been done in Scotland and Wales.

Overall, the initiative to create a comprehensive database linking environmental factors with health outcomes was well-received. The board viewed it as a valuable tool to inform better policies and improve children's health, provided ethical concerns and data security are properly handled.

### **3. Presentation on the use of AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) by the Ministry of Justice**

The topic of AI was introduced to the board by Dan Clay, who encouraged members to share their top-of-mind thoughts when it comes to the use of AI in government public services.

The board's primary concerns centred on data misuse and security. Some cited the negative portrayal of AI in the media as shaping their views, while most admitted that their fear and scepticism stemmed from a lack of knowledge and understanding of how AI actually works.

Bryce Millard then introduced himself and presented BOLD, a program run by the Ministry of Justice focusing on 'Better Outcomes through Linked Data'. He used

examples to explain the concept of administrative data, its collection, and the government's approach to linking such data to improve public services.

Bryce clarified that AI, particularly LLMs, are being used in a very controlled and limited manner to extract and summarise text data from various databases for better decision-making in areas like homelessness, substance misuse, and victim support. He emphasised the ethical use and robust regulation surrounding AI in government, aiming to ensure public trust and transparency.

The board members' questions relating to the BOLD program revolved around how secure the LLMs used by the government would be (i.e. protected against external access). Bryce responded by explaining that government-used LLMs are not replicated externally. Instead, existing models are fine-tuned internally without public exposure. He reassured the board that these models are used specifically for internal data extraction, with no cross-government sharing.

Overall, the board felt that Bryce's explanation about AI simplified it and made it seem less scary.

The board was prompted to think about how awareness around the use of AI in government can be increased amongst the general public. Suggestions related to explicitly mentioning the use of AI in impactful research, which could provide reassurance to the public. Sharing how AI and LLMs are used to improve quality of life, such as for crime victims or the homeless, could help gain acceptance thereby increasing public confidence.

#### **4. Forthcoming actions**

- Basis Social will canvass availability and preferences for the next session in a Doodle poll.

## Appendix 1: Recommendations and reflections from the last meeting on 23 July

### Reflection

This reflection comes from Sara Duru, previously an ADR England intern who presented at the last panel meeting:

*'Sincerely thank you to all the panellists that have participated at my presentation. I appreciated all your thoughts and feedback around my project. These were highly beneficial to me as they allowed me to enhance it by developing a final version of a young version research summary which now (thanks to you) has a strong equilibrium between text and visual elements.'*

Feedback from the Public Insights Panel informed the creation of a [young person's version of a research paper](#), now available on the ADR UK website.

### Actions taken forward

- The ADR UK Strategic Hub took on board the majority of suggestions regarding the name of the ADR UK podcast. The popular vote was for 'The Informed Society: The everyday data that shapes our lives', however, the name will be 'Connecting Society: The everyday data that shapes our lives'. It was decided the word 'informed' might put some people off, thinking it's an educational podcast or one for people with prior knowledge of data.
- The Strategic Hub are still exploring the possibility of a supporting Instagram page for the ADR UK podcast, and appreciate the panel's feedback.